

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Robert Wendell Trout was born on September 4, 1912, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Edgar E. and Edna B. Trout of Wayne, Pennsylvania. He had three brothers, named George B., John H., and Edgar E. After graduating from Radnor High School, Trout attended Lafayette College, graduating in 1934 with a Bachelor of Arts in English. While at Lafayette, Trout was very active in several campus organizations and groups, including Chi Phi fraternity, the Interfraternity Council, the Glee Club, and the Athletic Association. Trout was also active in track, wrestling, and the 150-pound football team. He received his Masters Degree in Education from the University of Pennsylvania in 1939.

Trout entered the service in July 1943 as a corporal in M.A.C. (Medical Administrative Corps). His first assignment was to teach illiterates at New Cumberland, Pennsylvania for one year. After attending the O.C.S. (Officer Candidate School) at Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1944, Trout was transported to South Carolina for shipment to Europe, but his orders changed and he was sent to Tinian in the Marianas in the Pacific Theater. After the Japanese surrender, Trout served one year of occupation duty in Fukuoka, Kyushu and Kobe, Honshu until he was discharged in the summer of 1946.

After the war, Trout returned to his teaching career and taught at Episcopal Academy in Overbrook, Pennsylvania for fifteen years. Before his retirement in 1977, Trout also worked as a Junior School Head at the Penn Charter School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and as a teacher at the Upper Merion Elementary School in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. During his career he was very active in adult education and as a wrestling coach.

Trout married Mary Richmonde Forcus on June 15, 1940, and had two sons, Steven and Robert. Trout currently lives in Honeybrook, Pennsylvania.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Robert W. Trout Collection (Nov. 1945 – Apr. 1946) comprises three occupation scrapbooks detailing his experiences as an Army medical supply officer posted to various station hospitals in Japan, which he titled "Japan Occupies an American." As a surprise for Trout, his wife compiled the scrapbooks using letters he sent home during the occupation. The scrapbooks are also interspersed with photographs, postcards, and Japanese currency.

## **INVENTORY**

### Folders

- 1 Fukuoka: 1945 (Nov.) – 1946 (Jan.)

The scrapbook begins on November 8, 1945, with Trout waiting to debark from a ship in Sasebo Harbor, Kyushu, where he had been shipped with the 309<sup>th</sup> General Hospital from Tinian in the Marianas. The hospital was housed in a fireproof,

reinforced concrete building, which had been a post office and postal insurance building. The structure was one of the few that survived the Allied incendiary bombing of the harbor and city.

Trout discusses Japanese culture, including clothing, gardening, religion, and education, and often makes comparisons to America. During many walks exploring the landscape, he interacted with Japanese children, and had the opportunity to give a presentation on America to a group of school children. Many of the photographs include the children who followed Trout and his companions. Trout was a special guest of a Japanese family participating in a traditional tea ceremony and an exchange of gifts. Trout discusses the relationship between the Japanese citizens and the Americans and his amazement of the clever way Japanese rebuilt using the meager materials available. Trout also discusses his job as supply officer, the challenges of keeping things in working order, the black-market, and his experience as defense council for an enlisted man. The scrapbook ends with an entry for January 12, 1946, which was the last letter sent home by Trout before he was transferred to Moji.

2 Moji: 1946 (Jan. – Feb.)

On January 19, 1946, Trout arrived at Moji, north Kyushu, across a narrow strait from Shimonosiki, Honshu, as a second lieutenant supply (medical) officer for the 122<sup>nd</sup> Station Hospital. Trout's letters discuss his experiences of exploring the city, harbor, and countryside with his friends.

3 Kobe: 1946 (Feb. – Apr.)

This book is composed of pictures and postcards of Trout's experiences from February 1946 to April 1946, including trips to Kyoto and Nara. In March 1946, Trout's hospital, the 122<sup>nd</sup> Station Hospital, moved from Moji, Kyushu to Kobe, Honshu, becoming the 375<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital. Trout notes in the front of the book that his letters home were thrown out and his wife, Mary, using information written on the back, wrote the photograph explanations. Of particular interest are the first two pictures in the book, which are of Hiroshima, taken by Trout from the train.

4 Sketches 17 Sketches of Japan in 1945 compiled by I-E Section

5 Robert Trout Interview with Michelle Webb (audiocassette) June 1, 2001

This audiocassette contains an interview of Robert Trout conducted by Special Collections and College Archives staff member Michelle Webb, in which Trout reminisces about his time spent in Japan during his occupation duty from 1945-1946.